

sink or swim by themundaneweirdo

Series: [hold my breath \(and let it bury me\)](#) [2]

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, Bad Parenting, Billy Hargrove Is Struggling, Billy Hargrove Needs Love, Billy Hargrove Tries to Be a Better Person, Billy Is So Messed Up, Billy Tries To Be A Good Brother, Brother/Sister Incest, Confessions, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, F/M, Hurt/Comfort, Implied Sexual Content, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Kissing, Love Confessions, Max Knows What She Wants, Neil Hargrove Being an Asshole, Parent-Child Relationship, Parent/Child Incest, Pedophilia, Pregnancy, Prenatal Visits, Protective Billy Hargrove, Sad Billy Hargrove, Self-Denial, Self-Hatred, Sibling Incest, Step-Sibling Incest, Step-parents, Step-siblings, Teen Pregnancy, Triggers, Unplanned Pregnancy, back story, good parenting

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Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair (past), Neil Hargrove/Susan Hargrove

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Summary:

Billy isn't doing too good with himself these days.

sink or swim

Author's Note:

BITCH WHAT THE FUCK - ya'll @ me

Second part is here! I might finish this off with a third part, but I don't know yet!

Its Billy's second winter spent in Hawkins. He's not used to the cold winds and snow storms, he hates that he has to wear actual clothes even in the house, and he hasn't been outside the walls of the home in a while. He actually kind of wishes school wasn't out for break so he would have an excuse to leave the premises, but the only excuse he really has is to go to town to buy himself more cigarettes or take his opportunities to get groceries for Susan. He doesn't mind going to town, especially if it means he can get away from Neil, but he wishes there were more to do in the shithole town of Hawkins, Indiana.

Billy had been thinking about getting a job, and not just to leave the house, but to actually help with bills and other things that the family will need soon. Neil's had to take extra shifts to have a bigger paycheck since Susan quit her job, and while Billy doesn't want to work with his dad, if it'll help with their money situation, he'll do what's necessary. All the older man can grumble about it how things have gone down the shitter, that everything is way worse than it was in California, except this time, it isn't Billy who has screwed everything up.

Neil's the only person that's not trying to make the best of the situation.

Susan quit to spend more time with Max and help her through the pregnancy, despite how her boss gave her the most pathetic excuse of understanding, and she's put more effort in her daughters best interest in the past six months than she has put in her marriage in a few years. Billy imagines it drives Neil crazy for his wife to basically abandon him to take care of a thirteen year old who is about to become a mom. It's karma for him, because he abandoned Billy for Susan not too long after his mom passed away, and here Neil's wife

is; unknowingly taking care of Billy's child.

Susan's constantly taking pictures of Max, has been since she began to show, despite the girl saying it's not necessary. But, Billy knows Max is soaking all of this up.

Even he's stepping up (as much as possible without raising suspicions) and helping with his step-sister. He helps her with her school work that Hawkins Middle School sends through the mail for her. He lets her vent when Max can't go to her mom about certain things, and he's become her rock through this whole ordeal. He wouldn't change it for the world, he likes having Max being so comfortable with him even though they're in quite the pickle, and Billy tries his hardest not to let her know how happy it makes him.

But Neil? He's just lives in the house with the rest of them.

Billy thought he'd at least try to act happy when Susan was around, but he doesn't. He ignores her when she asks how everyone's day is, pretends to listen when she tells them what Max's doctor said during her most recent appointment, and Neil dodges every little question Susan could possibly throw at him. What color should the crib be? Neil doesn't care. What brand of diapers should they stock up on? He doesn't pretend to care. Who will babysit when the baby is older? He doesn't give one single shit about any of it. Neil doesn't want anything to do with Max or the baby because he knows that neither of them will ever be his.

Neil's sick plans didn't go through, and sometimes Billy wants to yell in his face that the baby is his just to be hateful. But, he doesn't because he can't.

The last straw for the older man was when Susan presented sweaters for the family. Max's said 'Mother-To-Be', Billy's said 'Proud Uncle', and Susan and Neil's said 'Grandma' and 'Grandpa'. Neil literally threw the sweater into the fireplace before going to bed, ignoring Susan's crying. Max assured her that the shirts were wonderful, and Billy did, too. Really, they were, but the blonde just wished his said 'Father-To-Be'.

Max loves hers so much she wears it all the time since the cold

weather has come in with a full blast. She can be seen wearing it around the house while doing small chores or just lounging on the couch. She even sleeps in the tacky sweater. In her own bed, of course.

Billy doesn't let her sleep with him often, it makes him feel odd to have a thirteen year olds body against him when he knows what he's done. He'll allow her sometimes to share his bed, only when it's too cold in the house or she needs comfort. Billy doesn't let her get too close to him, and he wears shirts and long bedroom pants to ensure she gets the memo that he doesn't want to be touched in anyway. Max still tries, though.

Sometimes she truly just wants to be held, shielded away from the world and her own little space. Billy understands that, but that doesn't mean he can't have his boundaries, and Max is always pushing it.

The only time in six months that Billy has forced her to leave his bed is when she tried to kiss him again. Susan asked her why she was crying the next morning, and Billy felt bad about rejecting her affection. Not that he would tell her.

Predictably, when the news broke about the baby, Lucas Sinclair broke up with Max. She wasn't too upset, although she cried for a day, but after that, she let the horse die. Like dominos, one by one, her little pack of friends slowly shut her out until it was only Hopper's daughter who had anything to do with Max. Jane likes to stop by still to this day, and she likes to put her hand on Max's stomach, and the redhead is too happy to still have a friend to even try to stop her. Jane is the only person out of Hawkins Middle School to congratulate her and help her through this difficult time.

Lucas told her to fuck off, and Max didn't care enough to hear what the others had to say.

Matter of fact, she's never really cared what anyone has had to say about the baby. Max didn't give two shits about what Lucas thought of her, played it off as she didn't need his negativity. Dustin and Will's polite but obvious disregard for her hadn't come close to bothering her, and Mike's smartass mouth didn't even make her flush

with embarrassment.

The only time Billy had seen his step-sister show even a small sliver of emotion is when Susan found out. She yelled at her daughter for being stupid, yelled at Billy for not watching her and preventing it, although it was his fault in the first place for all of it, and Max put on a face that was unreadable. But, the blonde saw how her lower lip quivered, her eyes welled with tears, and her hands went over her belly like she was shielding it from harm. It made Billy's heart ache.

He'll never forget how the older redheads face blew up. Susan's always been a gentle person, but she could've taken Neil with how furious she was. She yelled and screamed and cried, her daughters life was over, everything will be horrible for her and people will look at her different and talk about her. She was so upset, so furious, so sad because Max's life was about to be turned upside down. All their lives were. But, even with Susan's fury, Neil couldn't even muster a grumble of distaste. He simply nodded his head and left the dinner table, his meal gone cold and his anger silently ignited.

And then Susan demanded to know who the father was. Max was a sputtering mess, spouting out that it wasn't Susan's business when she and Billy both knew it was her business. The older redhead kept pushing and pushing until her daughter said it was a visiting cousin of someone from school, and they left during the summer before school started. Billy is still surprised that Susan bought that bullshit.

It didn't hurt any less when it hit Billy that the baby might not ever truly know who it's real father is. God forbid he ever said that out loud.

Obviously, Susan pulled Max from public school, but with the special situation, Hawkins Middle School began to send school work through the mail, and it's been that way since the school year came back around. Billy still goes to school, he doesn't have a reason not to, but it's still hard when people look at him and sneer something about having a whore of a little sister. It's like having a building full of Neil's thrown in his face, only these people can have their faces beat in and he'll only have detention for a few days.

Billy has to keep this tough outer shell on so no one knows he's gone

soft for his sister, but when Tommy made some joke that he's losing his groove as King Billy of Hawkins because of Max, Billy turned around and said, "Don't ever say her name," before socking him in the face. To anyone else, it would've sounded mean and dripping with venom because Tommy brought up his brat sister, but to Billy, the freckled boy isn't worthy to say Max's name.

Susan quit her job not too long after Max was pulled from public school, and that's when Neil's mood changed from reckless and mean to meditated and destructive. His attention shifted from putting his son down to completely destroying his step-daughter. Billy didn't know until Max told him, that Neil had once cornered her while Susan was getting groceries and Billy was out with some basketball buddies, and he asked her things he shouldn't have.

"He asked me if I was a good girl, or if I was someone's wh-whore," she whispered on one of the few nights Billy let her sleep with him.

She was only about three months along, so her belly wasn't very big, just enough for Billy to feel as she buried herself in his chest. He'd had a bad day at school, but Max's was obviously worse, otherwise she wouldn't have been telling him that in the privacy of the otherwise silent room.

Billy's grip on her tightened as he replied, "When? When did he do this?"

"When you left for practice and mom went to town."

Fuck. Neil had called in sick that day, something about his head and stomach, but it was obvious in that moment that the only thing that was sick about Neil was his agenda for the day.

"You're not a whore, Max. And if he ever touches you, or speaks to you again, you tell me. He has no right to talk or touch."

What's mine, is what he didn't say, but Max seemed to get the message. She nodded and clung to him more, her face going to his neck and her arms around his chest. Even with their clothes on, he could feel warmth radiating from her, like a fever in the middle September. Billy held her close, not caring how uncomfortable he

was, and let her take pleasure in knowing that she was safe in his arms. He didn't say anything for a long time, he allowed her to soak all the affection up while she can.

It wasn't until Max moved her head a little that Billy felt her lips on his skin. Except, it wasn't a wet or heated kiss, it had no fire behind it like the first one she'd ever put one on him. It was innocent, but warm, full of something that Billy wouldn't dare admit to himself.

"I..."

Her voice was somber, like she wasn't sure what she was going to say. Billy petted over her hair as a dog down the street barked, and she relaxed into his hold. He heard her breath hitch slightly as his fingers stroked over the red strands, pulling knots free.

"I really appreciate you letting me stay in bed with you, and letting me talk about stuff because I can't talk with mom. She doesn't understand."

Billy frowned, his hand pausing. "I don't want you to feel like you have to come to me just because you can't talk to Susan. You can talk to Jane if you want."

She shifted so her hands were free, and she grabbed his face so he was forced to look at her. Her gentle blue eyes shone in the darkness, like stars in the night sky, bright and bold. Billy had never taken her eyes into much consideration, but at that moment, they might as well be the most beautiful sight he's ever seen. They shimmered and they sparkled like fireworks, they left Billy breathless.

"I come to you because I know you'll listen, because you care," she said before pressing a small, innocent kiss to the corner of his mouth.

That was the first time he didn't push her away, but he didn't pull her closer either. Billy didn't know how to process her words, so he just let her sleep while curled next to him, and he didn't bring it up to her.

He hasn't thought about it until now, three months later. He's at the doctor's office one town over, nearly an hour drive from Hawkins,

with Max for her usual two week checkup.

Susan usually goes, but she had went to the grocery store earlier right after Neil left for work, but she didn't hustle like usual, so the heavy snowfall has snowed the store in. Luckily, she was able to use a payphone to call the house and kindly asked Billy if he would take Max, because as per usual, Neil didn't answer his office phone. Billy agreed, so now, here he and Max are, one town over in a chilly waiting room.

Billy made her bundle up before they left their home, even brought a blanket just in case, which Max is now using to cover up with while leaning on his shoulder. She hasn't been getting too good of a sleep since her belly has grown and it puts pressure on her little back, so she takes naps whenever and wherever she can. Not that Billy minds her napping on him, it makes him feel needed, but he doesn't like the prying eyes of the other people in the office.

The blanket helps to conceal Max's belly, but when the nurse calls her name, she stands and some of the people glance at her with raised eyebrows. It takes all of Billy not to flip them off.

The doctor has Max quickly change so she's in a paper gown, and Billy holds her clothes after he helps her get situated on the table. Her legs are swinging over the side, her red socks bright and vibrant in the otherwise monotone room, and her arms are around her belly while waiting for Dr. Burnes. He's the only doctor that would take Max's case, no questions asked, and he doesn't give off those creepy old dude vibes. Like Hell Billy would let someone like that come near Max or his baby.

"What do you think it is?"

Max looks at Billy with an expectant look, her feet now crossed and legs stilled. One of her hands is absently minded rubbing over her belly, and Billy doesn't know if he wants to feel the kicking she's probably feeling.

"I don't know. A boy, maybe," he says, eyes flicking between her face and midsection. "What about you?"

Max shrugs. "I wouldn't mind a boy, but I feel like it's a girl."

Billy smiles lightly before it drops as Dr. Burnes steps in. His glasses are perched high on his nose, making his eyes appear bigger and rounder than they actually are. He smiles at Max and nods at Billy, and then pulls his chair from under the counter.

"Nice to see you both," he says, scooting his chair until he's close to Max. He flips a few pages on his clipboard, pausing to read over them. "So, I see you're six months exactly today, correct?"

Max nods, and Billy does, too, out of habit.

"Well, any questions before I begin? Anything new or odd happened since I last saw you?"

Max shakes her head again, so Dr. Burnes continues.

Billy tries not to pay too much attention during this part, because for one, he doesn't want to see Max's bare belly. And for two, he doesn't think he could take the image of seeing another man's hands on her, despite knowing he's a medical professional and he's doing his job. He still has his moments of doubt in what some people would call a possessive haze, but Billy isn't possessive over anyone, especially Max.

Because of her age, Dr. Burnes measures her stomach with a measuring tape to ensure the baby is developing along, but still tells Billy to keep an eye on her. The blonde nods as the doctor lays Max down, and tells her to even her breathing before using a stethoscope on her belly. The room goes quiet as he moves the medical instrument around a few times and then stops, listening closely. Dr. Burnes face breaks out in a smile, and he glances up at Max.

"Would you like to hear?," he asks her, and Max nods.

Once the stethoscope is placed in her ears, she, too, breaks out in a smile, and Billy can see the tears starting to form in her eyes. She glances at him and says, "Billy, come listen."

If anyone else had asked, Dr. Burnes or a nurse, he would've said no. But, because it's Max, and he because he's grown attached to the

baby even if he won't admit it, he can't deny her almost anything, so he stands and lays her clothes in the chair before walking up to the table.

Max eagerly passes the stethoscope to him, and he puts the earphones in his ears, and listens close. He hears Max's body moving around in the inside for a moment, but that soon fades away when the gentle thump and thrum of the baby's heartbeat fills his head. It's calm, steady and so real it makes Billy's head spin. Up until now, he could've tricked himself to thinking maybe this was all a bad dream, but he can hear his son or daughter's heart going fast, strong, and loud, and Billy cannot deny himself this reality.

"It-it's strong," Billy says, pulling the stethoscope out of his ears, quickly wiping at his eyes to rid the tears there. He swears he's not crying.

"Yes, it is. I was worried the baby's heartbeat would be a little weak with Max's age, but she and the baby are progressing just fine."

Dr. Burnes removes the instrument from Max's belly and hangs it around his neck before turning to Billy. "Mr. Hargrove, I take it you're her guardian for this check up? Or are you waiting for your parents?"

Billy shakes his head. "They're both snowed in, so I'm here."

"Can you come with me? I need to speak with you, and I'll get my nurse in to conduct the rest of her check up."

Billy nods, glancing back at Max's worried expression. He follows Dr. Burnes down the hall, stopping as the older man tells a nurse behind the office counter to report to Max's check up room, and with each step, he feels his heart go faster and faster. Maybe Dr. Burnes knows about Billy and Max, or he's suspected something is wrong with the baby or—

"Mr. Hargrove, what I'm about to tell you may worry you, but I can assure you, I'm only telling you this for Max's best interest," he says as he sits behind his desk in his office, gesturing for Billy to sit in one of the arm chairs.

“Well,” the older man says once Billy is situated. “As you know, Max is a very special case. It’s not everyday you have a thirteen year old having a baby, but even with that said, she’s progressing wonderfully and the baby seems healthy. The only concern I have is that when it’s time for her to deliver, I don’t think her body can deliver naturally.”

Billy frowns, leaning forward in his chair, his elbows being cushioned by his knees. “What do you mean?”

Dr. Burnes sighs, adjusting his glasses. “What I mean, is that a cesarean section may have to be performed due to how small Max is. Her body isn’t able to take that trauma.”

“So you’re going to cut her open?”

The older man sadly nods. “When the time comes, I may have to.”

It’s a blur as Billy goes back to the room. Max is dressed again, her blanket held folded in her lap, and she looks at him with so many questions in her eyes, but he can’t answer them right now. He checks them out, and Max keeps asking if he’s okay, and he tells her he’s fine, but he’s a damn liar. He processing the fact that Max will probably be cut open and scarred just to have the baby, and it’s makes Billy feel guilty because fuck, he did this to her. He knocked her up and while she’s trying to make the best of it, it’s not enough to ease his ever going guilt and sin.

“You want something to eat before we go back home?,” he asks, and he hopes Max doesn’t see the tears welling in his eyes.

“Billy, are you okay?”

Fuck. Billy can’t stop the tears spilling over, heavy and hot down his face. He leans forward, his arms resting over the steering wheel, and his whole body just heaves with every sob and cry and grunt. He can’t calm himself down, even Max’s gentle voice can’t break through with him.

Her hands are on his face, trying to pull him off the wheel while saying, “Billy, look at me, Billy, please.” Billy doesn’t want to budge, he doesn’t want to look at her and look at her stomach because he

knows he did that to her, that he got her pregnant, he made a big mistake, he-he-

He raped her. Oh, God, Billy raped her.

“Fuck, Max. I... I-“

“What? What did you do?,” Max asks, steadily pulling at his arms to try to get him to lean up.

“I raped you!”

He feels her hands let go of him, and he sobs, ugly and raw and loud. Billy can't look at her, he can't do anything with Max sitting right across from him in the small confines of his car. The winter weather makes the whole thing worse, because he's freezing his balls off, Max is probably cold, too, but he can't bring himself to move, to even breathe properly.

What if she tells someone? What if she wants Billy put away for what he's done? What if-

Max grabs his face and forces him to look at her. Her expression is hard, but gentle, full of something warm and fuzzy. No, it can't be love. Max doesn't love him, no, she doesn't, she can't. He's used her, he hurt her in ways he shouldn't have, that no one should ever hurt her. There's no way she's looking at him with love in her beautiful blue eyes, she's not stroking over his cheek with adoration, and she's certainly not leaning into his face.

“You didn't do that, Billy. You could never do that.”

He sighs, heavy and snotty, but he doesn't believe one word from her mouth. He did rape her, he did use her, and she shouldn't be lying to him like this. It'll only hurt her in the long run. He needs to push her away, just like he should've that night, he should've done a lot of things that he didn't. He should've put those beers away, should've told Max to sleep over at Hopper's, should've had more control over himself. Fuck, he's just like Neil. No, no, he's worse than Neil because he acted, and now look where he is; crying in his Camaro in the middle of December while his thirteen year old step-sister is pregnant

with his child.

Max wipes at his cheeks with her thumbs, smiling when he leans into her hands, despite his self hatred and the urge to pull away from her. “You could never do wrong in my eyes, okay? Look at what you’ve done for me; you let me share a bed when I don’t want to sleep alone. You let me vent to you about stuff, you help me with school work, and you’ve–“

“Stop.”

Max’s mouth freezes at Billy’s cold tone, despite his flushed cheeks and red eyes. He looks weak, vulnerable and open, and his voice is dripping with instability. He’s shaking his head free of her grasp, leaning into his car window and refusing to look at her. He knows if he does, he’ll crumble.

But her hand cups his jaw, and Billy lets her turn his face, and he feels like crying all over again. Max brushes a curl out of his face, her fingers tracing over his cheek, and then her thumb over his bottom lip.

“I wanted you,” she all but whispers, glancing between his mouth and eyes. “I love you.”

Billy feels the tears, and then her lips on his. His hand flies up to grab the back of her head, to hold her there, and she stays, tracing her fingers over his cheekbone. Slowly, he pulls away and looks at her, Max’s own blue eyes watery and searching his for something that she hopes to find.

“I can’t do this, Max. I–“

“Do you love me?”

He shallows, sighing shakily and cupping her belly with his free hand, allowing himself the tender touch that he’s never allowed before. His son or daughter is just under Max’s skin, and it makes him ache somewhere deep in his chest. He looks into her eyes, those deep orbs that he cannot escape.

Billy nods. “Yes.”

He's admitting it for the first time since he's found out, giving into everything he's wanted since day one, and God, does it feel good. He can feel the warmth radiating off Max, and he doesn't stop her when she kisses him again, and again, and again, until she's out of breath and Billy's finally stopped crying.

On the way back to their house, with Max curled up under the blanket, Billy can't help but think of how much deep shit he's got himself into.

Author's Note:

Comments are my fuel!

Should Max have a boy or girl, and what names?

Also, do you think Billy was right to push Max away for a good bit? Why? Why not? Let me know!!!